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ABSTRACT

Until 1960, two types of publications prevailed in the historiography of adult education--the history of individual educational organizations or establishments and biographical studies concerning leading adult education theoreticians or practitioners. The specificity of the development of adult education historiography since the 1960s is due not only to an increase of interest in the historical aspects of problems but also to a qualitative change in the actual object of study. A result is better recordkeeping and statistics, improved coordination of the endeavors of various institutions, and intensified efforts to keep count of all organizations and institutions operating in the adult education field on a nationwide scale. A series of syntheses on the history of adult education in particular countries has appeared. They are of the following types: (1) the "outline narrative" (Kelly; 1962, 1970), a survey of all printed reports on all activities of adult education from Anglo-Saxon times; (2) organized adult education in the modern state--French approach; (3) focused approach--adult education as workers education; (4) history of precedents--the Czechoslovak example; and (5) supersynthesis or eclecticism, as represented by the history edited by F. Poggeler (1975). Arguably, there is a small chance of success in theorizing the history of adult education, although precisely the history of adult education might contribute to the conceptualization of the theory of adult education. (YLB)

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Toward a Typology of European Adult Education Historiography

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Since the early 1960´s, the importance of history has been markedly increasing perhaps in all social science branches. F.Braudel has formulated the thesis that it is precisely history which is called upon to consolidate the social sciences; and quite recently, a group of Soviet experts noted, in a survey of the development of the theory of science, that "theory is becoming historized". This evidently results from the fact that neopositivism and partly also structuralism, which are ahistorical in their essence, have lost their dominant theoretical positions. A considerable part of directions which are vaguely called post-positivist see precisely their ahistorism as a limitation that has prevented their further development and broader application, despite numerous and undoubted partial successes. The growth of the importance of history is of course necessarily accompanied with changes in the historical science itself. If we accept the statement that "theory is becoming historized", the conditio sine qua non is that also "history become theorized". From the viewpoint of these processes, we are striving to analyze the present state of the historiography of adult education.

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Till 1960, the following two types of publications absolutely prevailed in the historiography of adult education:

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1) the history of individual educational organizations or establishments, based on annual reports and miscellanies issued on special anniversaries, and
2) biographical studies concerning leading adult education theoreticians or practitioners - moreover, mostly such as had won renown also in other fields of activity (Comenius, G.Birbeck, N.F.Gruntvig, N.K.Krupskaya etc.).

Apologetic moments, an effort to emphasize the importance of activity for the development of the society, and high moral qualities of adult education workers - then mostly voluntary and badly /if at all/ paid were clearly predominant in both types.

A quantitatively much smaller place was awarded to attempts for expanding some types of adult education in various countries (e.g. the Danish Folkhighschool or the British University Extension), and to the elaboration of the history of all adult education institutions in some local monographs. In methodological terms, these two approaches were more stimulating, but the "workmanlike" ~~liked~~ level of their elaboration was quite low in most cases even when measured by the standards of their time. Enthusiasm and diletantism, which were a major driving force for the development of adult education, found rather a negative reflexion in historiographic work.

With negligible exceptions, these works can serve only as sources requiring a considerably critical approach.

The specificity of the development of adult education historiography since the 1960´s - when compared with other social science disciplines - lies in the fact that what has been taking place is not only an increase of interest in the historical aspects of problems but also a qualitative change of the actual object of study - i.e. adult education itself. Adult education has been rapidly gaining social respect, in many instances the different forms of postschool

education have been receiving larger budgetary allocations, adult education (or rather, further education, education permanente etc.) is given much greater attention in legislation, numerous forms of adult education are becoming more cosistently institutionalized, and the teaching and managerial staff are becoming largely professionalized. This naturally also involves better record-keeping and statistics, improved coordination of the endeavours of various institutions, intensified efforts to keep count of all organizations and institutions operating in the adult education field on a nation-wide scale.

This is first manifested in a higher professional quality of traditionally oriented studies from the history of adult education, as well as some significant shifts in the direction of comprehensiveness of view (for example, besides histories of individual organizations, miscellanies appear with growing frequency concerning the histories of a number of organizations associated in national coordinating centres). Partial monographs and articles on partial problems are already written on the level of the present-day professional historical science, and thus it can be noted that the most important new phenomenon is the appearance of a series of synthetic works on the history of adult education in particular countries. We shall now attempt their typology. 1) Kelly's (1962, 1970) "outline narrative" is indeed an impressive survey of perhaps all printed reports on all activities which can be included under the heading of adult education, from the Anglo-Saxon times to the present. It is the outcome of immense erudition and diligence which, as far as we know, does not have a parallel in another European country. It is of course true that this work does not meet the demands of the "theorization of history": the object and the applied categories are not precisely defined, questions are not clearly formulated - simply the author's introductory characteristic of the work as "outline narrative" is very accurate. Most presentday historians -

including those concerned with the history of adult education - are not going to content themselves with this kind of approach. However, it is important to realize, I believe, that while in cultural history, the history of science etc., such outlines narrative are mostly available, and in many cases have existed for a hundred years or more, in the history of adult education this work is rather unique. It is therefore necessary to consider whether it can be skipped, whether precisely the existence of this type of work is not an indispensable prerequisite for theoretically and methodologically more demanding works, whether it does not represent a necessary reservoir of facts and views making possible a precise definition of more exacting approaches?

2) Organized adult education in the modern State - French approach. The two most notable syntheses of adult education in France (A.Léon, N.Terrot) both came out in 1983, and despite considerable differences in conception, they have many common features typical of the present-day trends of adult education development in France, which are determined by the State-Entrepreneur-Trades Union triangle of forces and efforts. Both authors therefore start with the emergence of the Modern State in the French Revolution, devote extraordinary attention to debates on adult education in legislative bodies, to collisions between the State and educational institutions, and pay main regard to workers' educational institutions. Unlike Kelly /and let us add, also contrary to the most influential directions of the present-day French history of civilization, private life or way of life etc.), they quite neglect the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and humanism, the emergence of the "Gutenberg Galaxy", the Reformation and the origins of modern science. They even leave out the glorious French Enlighment to which many a French organization of "l'éducation populaire" owes its ideology. This chronological restriction then quite consistently leads to the omission (more or less) of some activities which are regarded by many

as a major component part of adult education, one which, in many areas, offers prospects for the future: the activities of public libraries, expansion of specialized popular science magazines, the work of more or less "learned" societies, e.g. those concerned with disseminating the knowledge of homeland, as well as sometimes very influential, though quite informal, Salons etc. Even if the above mentioned authors use more sophisticated techniques of historical work than Kelly, the question arises whether fulfil the conditions of fruiful theorization of history: theorization always presupposes certain reduction, but the question is whether this reduction really is theoretically justified, or merely derived from the most conspicuous line of changes in the relatively short period of time between 1870 and 1970?

3) Focused approach - adult education as workers education. This approach proceeds from the Marxist conception of society, especially the tenets on the culture of each epoch as the culture of the ruling class, and on the role of working class who are predetermined by their objective social position for changing the society, but to achieve this, they must master the results of science from their own positions and despite the efforts of the ruling class to prevent them from doing so. In this situation, the working class find a suitable tool in adult education, thus either bringing about its qualitative change or actually calling it into being. Such approach was typical of some workers educational organizations already in the late 19th century, and was developed in the 1920's. Among present-day historical works, it is best represented in those of F.Balser (1959) and F.M.DeSanctis (1978). In our opinion, this approach has many advantages as regards the necessary theorization of history in a firmly defined concept apparatus and clearly stated goals of inquiry even in partial issues. But even here we find an essential limitation: desirable theorization is not made on the basis of a certain interpretation of a complex of "adult education",

but draws upon a theory of an incomparably broader reach, in the framework of which it constitutes a well-elaborated component, but simply does not cover a large part of empirically ascertainable "adult education", whatever its definition. What is therefore taking place is an even more consistent reductionism than in the previous case /this naturally applies also to the chronological frames which shift as far as the mid-19th century in the case of Germany and Italy, and the 1870´s or 1890´s for East-European countries/.

4) History of precedents - the Czechoslovak example. When analyzing Czechoslovak works (e.g. Škoda 19?7 et.al., in greater detail in Savický 1985), we can see that the criterion for the reduction of material is the rather vague term "progressive" - described are organizations or forms of adult education which are "progressive" at a given time in relation to the overall constellation of social forces. It is however interesting to note that the "progressive" elements in adult education in their sum total do not form any noticeable line, and the description of adult education thus becomes inconsequential from the aspect of the chosen object, and fully dependent on changing contemporary frames of reference (for instance, the change of criteria for evaluating certain activities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the free Czechoslovak Republic, before and after the emergence of social democracy, resulted in simple disappearance of some organizations and institutions). The above mentioned works owe their qualities to the conditions in which they originated: when the university-level preparation of adult education workers was being expanded, the students had to be provided with at least a perfunctory view of the development in the sphere of their future activity, without pursuing more thorough theoretical preparation. A certain methodological lag of the wider field of the history of pedagogy also found its reflection here.

5) Supersynthesis or eclecticism? In many aspects, the most ambitious history of adul education under study is the thick volume devoted to history from the Handbuch der Erwachsenbildung edited by F.Pöggeler (1975). First, it includes not only Germany, and moreover in some cases it contains also attempts at truly global views (e.g. as regards university adult education). What is even more essential is the structure of the work: it is approached from 4 aspects - history by epochs, history of institutions, history according to motives (intentions), and last but not least, history according to personalities. In addition, this work is the outcome of combined efforts of nearly thirty highly qualified authors. However, its analysis reveals that a synthesis has not been achieved. In one section the authors even see their themes very differently. In the history of institutions, for example, some are narrowly concerned with the development of a now existing institution in the FRG (thus naturally starting as recently as 1945), others pay greater attention to the predecessors of that particular institution, i.e. to the pre-history from which it proceeded. Even greater differences can be found in the "Motivgeschichte" section. There we can see the mentioned attempts at international viewpoints as well as narrowly national approaches, summarization of facts with encyclopedic brevity as well as attempts at quite broad generalizations. Equally varied is also the "Epochalgeschichte", where the stress in laid on the development of ideas represented by outstanding thinkers in some parts, and on the development of organizations in relation to social development in others. It should be borne in mind that these differences in many cases stem not only from the approaches of the individual authors but also from the nature of the object under study, the state of sources and literature. It can nevertheless be noted, in our opinion, that what has resulted is not a synthesis but a collection of very heterogenous material.

So these are the basic types of synthetic elaboration from recent years which we have selected from literature available to us. Naturally this available literature did not include all relevant literature - from reviews and references, we know of probably interesting Swedish, French and Polish works which we failed to procur; and an even larger number of works no doubt escaped our notice. Still it can be assumed that the overall picture would be much the same. It seems that the history of adult education has not yet found its theoretical plane which would help to reveal the tendencies of development of adult education in particular, in its specificity, and thus significantly contribute to understanding the present situation and prognosticating the future.

It should therefore be considered whether this is due to the relative youth of the branch, or whether the causes are deeper-laid. We rather lean towards the latter belief, for the following reasons: theoretical history, unlike purely factographic history, must have a firmly defined object which even in reality forms, to a large degree, an autonomous system. But the theory of adult education itself proved that its object is not a comprehensive system, self-identical in the course of a long time. This is manifested in the persisting unclarity as to what should actually be included under adult education: whether only liberal adult education or also vocational adult education, whether only formal or also non-formal education, only intentional education or also the spontaneous influence of the environment, etc. The difference of definitions obviously is not quite incidental. This is because in no case does adult education constitute a specific system. Where it forms a real system, it starts closely approaching initial education. Where it preserves its specificity, especially its great innovative capacities, it stops being a real and observable system. This is a main reason for my opinion that there is a small

chance of success in theorizing the history of adult education and thus placing it into the level of the present-day demands of the historical science.

On the other hand, precisely the history of adult education might contribute to the conceptualization of the theory of adult education. In that case it would of course really be necessary to proceed from the collection of very wide and at first heterogenous material, i.e. try to do what Kelly did for Great Britain. On that basis only is it possible to strive for conceptualization, while obviously avoiding both conceptualization ex post from the existing state of adult education in a given country, and conceptualization from the viewpoint of broader theories which necessarily suppress, at least to a considerable degree, the specificity of adult education. In order safely to sail through these straits, it is perhaps useful to proceed from comparative study of adult education history. In this context it could be remarked that although international contacts in the area of adult education have been promisingly developing, and the need of comparative researches has been increasingly accentuated, the share of comparative studies in the total production on the history of adult education has diminished not only comparing with the break of the 1950´s and 1960´s but also against the end of the last and first half of this centuries. This allows us to formulate a more optimistic hypothesis that we are passing through a period of accumulation of material which may still result in a theoretically much more important syntheses. Indeed an alternation of analytic and synthetic phases in known in many historical disciplines.

But personally I believe that a real system is formed not by adult education but by lifelong education, whose development was only somewhat distorted by the constitution of compulsory school systems which produced, for a short time, the impression of absolute autonomy and self-sufficiency. In this way they disturbed the theoretically more

central perspective of lifelong education which had been prevailing till the 18th century, and is beginning to gain the upper hand again in our time. The development of adult education will probably be grasped from the theoretical aspect only in this context.

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